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MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE MARYLAND CONTENT STANDARDS

200 W. Baltimore Street ◆ Baltimore, MD 21201 ◆ Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools

Revised May 2001

What are the Maryland Content Standards?

The Maryland Content Standards specify the essential knowledge and skills that all students are expected to learn by the end of specific grades. These standards help to clarify for teachers, students, and parents what students should master in reading, writing, mathematics, and other core academic areas. Local school systems will use Maryland's Content Standards to guide their own curricula.

How will content standards further statewide school reform?

Specifying the essential academic content and knowledge that all students need to learn helps ensure that each student, regardless of wealth, social background, or geographic location, has an equal opportunity to study a challenging curriculum. The Maryland Content Standards support components of the Pre-K-12 Academic Intervention Plan, the Middle Learning Years Task Force Report, and the Maryland State Department of Education Strategic Plan.

Maryland's clearly defined, measurable content standards help ensure that students statewide will be held to challenging expectations and have access to rigorous coursework. They also bring an increased focus and coherence to Maryland's public school system, driving statewide school reform efforts in curriculum, assessment, professional development, and accountability. The common vision provided by these content standards is the logical next step in statewide school reform, setting the stage for even greater increases in student achievement.

Who developed the Maryland Content Standards?

The development of the Maryland Content Standards took over a year and a half and involved more than 200 teachers, administrators, and education experts from Maryland's 24 local school systems; the Maryland State Department of Education; and two national organizations with standards development expertise, the Council for Basic Education and Standards Work. The standards have undergone a rigorous review process, during which they were compared to widely respected state and national organization standards and examined by more than 40 experts. *Quality Counts 2001*, published by **Education Week**, awarded Maryland an A for standards and accountability.

How will the standards affect state assessments such as MSPAP and the new high school assessments?

The Maryland Content Standards were used to update the Maryland Learning Outcomes, which drive the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), the state's K-8 assessment program. In 2002, MSPAP will be aligned with the new content standards. The high school assessments will test the Core Learning Goals that are embedded in the Maryland Content Standards.

Where can I get more information about the Maryland Content Standards?

The Maryland Content Standards are available on the School Improvement website at *www.mdk12.org*. For more information about the Maryland Content Standards, call the Division of Instruction, Maryland State Department of Education, at 410-767-0316.

For more information, call 410-767-0600 (Baltimore area) or 1-888-246-0016 (toll free) or visit our website at www.msde.state.md.us

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